

Posted by u/PodgeWrites Dial-A-Human 5 years ago

I Used to Write Horror Stories

OC

I used to write horror stories.

Actually, that's not strictly accurate. I wrote horrific, pulpy, unbelievably awful stories which only individuals as depraved as myself would ever take any pleasure from reading, let alone writing. Imagine the greatest sins you could possibly commit, something so against your own nature that it seemed an abomination from its very inception. Imagine what you could never do to even your most disliked enemy, and you have an inkling of the type of filth I wrote. My work has been banned on every world where they go in for banning books, and I have been politely 'advised' by certain government bodies to avoid publishing my work on several planets that don't.

So imagine my surprise when an actual government representative, from the Office of Extra Species Affairs no less, arrived on my doorstep with a request. In no uncertain terms, he asked me to come up with the most horrific alternative history for our planet that I possibly could. Something so sublimely awful that it would give hardened criminals nightmares. The only condition was that, in the end, it had to square up with more or less with how our civilisation has panned out in the modern day. Well, that seemed just fine to me.

I asked him how believable it had to be. He actually blanched at that, though I didn't know why at the time, and informed me it didn't need to be believable at all. In fact, the more outlandish and seemingly impossible it was the better. Then he offered me a very sizeable pay check, told me where I could send the script, and left.

Well, who was I to turn down such an interesting request (or the money, for that matter?) I powered up my slate and started to write. I really let loose, even throwing in a few scenes that would give me nightmares, at least at the time. A few weeks later I had a first draft that touched upon pretty much every major world event I could recall from history lessons, but with the darkest imaginable twists, turns and horrors.

I submitted the piece, and it was rejected within the day. Too tame, I was told, not enough horror. Not enough mindless violence.

Well, at this point I started to take things seriously – this was practically an affront to my professional integrity, after all. I took back the script, reworked it considerably, and resubmitted. Again, it came back with major revisions. The right direction, they said, but still too mild. The characters were too comprehensible, the violence too sedate, the overall themes too positive. I couldn't believe it at first – to my mind this was some of my most outrageous work – but I stuck with it. Weeks passed, until at last I awoke one late afternoon to the same government rep at my door.

I still wasn't getting it, apparently. He wanted to show me something that would open my eyes to what exactly it was I should be aiming for.

He brought me to what amounted to a bunker annex of a high security station somewhere I'm not allowed to say. We went through myriad checks, scans and more. They mostly seemed concerned that I might be carrying any kind of recording device, or any way of copying or transmitting data. Satisfied I wasn't, they showed me into a room with a single book sitting on a table, surrounded by more security than I'd seen at some banks. They gave me an empty bucket and a jug of water, and left.

Less than 10 minutes in I found out what the bucket was for. An hour later and I'd found at least two more uses for it.

They eventually pulled me out, raving and sick and in the midst of a panic attack. They were impressed. Apparently I'd read more of the damn thing in one sitting than most individuals could stand to know of it at all. They gave me some time to clean up, but even then I knew what I'd read would stay with me for the rest of my life. It was made none the better for being fiction – just knowing a mind out there could conceive of such madness was enough. When I was ready, they took me to another room.

My handler, the guy from the Office of Extra Species Affairs, sat down opposite me and began to talk. He started talking about a new species they'd discovered, and explained that they were responsible for the book. Well, said I, that species has a pretty fucked up imagination. Maybe leave them right where they are, no?

That wasn't an option, he explained. They hadn't been contacted yet, but had recently discovered the Quinton particle, and thus would likely figure out FTL within a generation.

Well then, I said, don't let them publish any more books! There I was, a victim of censorship myself, promoting the same for a fellow author, but to be honest I was having a hard time considering whoever vomited up that garbage as a colleague. It was the most horrendous thing I'd ever read. Deaths in the millions, billions even, nuclear energy turned into bombs, used inside atmospheres, on populated cities! The book described a species that invented cars before they invented computers that could safely drive them. Hell, they'd invented air travel before they'd invented parachutes! I'd had to check the appendix of the damn thing to find out what concepts like rape, incest, spree killing and genocide even were. My gods, genocide. I was an amateur; this author was in a different league entirely, and he was welcome to stay there.

Why the hell did they even get me to try match this crap in the first place, I asked. What was this, some kind of cross species literary pissing contest?

That's when he dropped it on me. The book, it wasn't a work of fiction. Despite incredulity by every being who had ever studied it, the damn thing was in fact an actual history of a real species. And this race, these fucking monsters, were about to break out of their own system and start wandering around actual habitable, civilised star systems! They whole thing, the frankly ludicrous notion of getting me to write a horrific alternative to our own history, was part of some grand first contact scheme the Conclave

had cooked up. They had me write it because they were going to present it to this species as our actual history, in the hopes that they'd believe it and think they were dealing with a species capable of the same type of shit they were. All this because, the thinking went, if they knew what comparative wimps we were, we'd be the next... the next fucking genocide they'd attempt. Actually, they already had a word for it – Xenocide – the wiping out of an alien race. These fuckers hadn't even met an alien race yet and they already had the vocabulary in place for killing ever last one of us.

Shit like that really put the wrongs of our kind into perspective. What was one infamous lunatic accidentally pushing two people to their deaths while fleeing an incorrect change incident in light of the existence of something like nerve gas? This comparison in particular was fresh in my mind as the centennial memorial service of the Vonegerk massacre had been just the month before.

Anyway, I bugged right out of that bunker. No way was I going to be involved in that crazy plan, and no way would it work in the first place – a species like that would smell the fake a mile off, then probably eat whoever presented it to them. I can't believe it just wrote that, a line about one sentient eating another... I could have gotten a whole book out of that, back when I was writing. Do you know they have a word for eating a member of their own species? Cannibalism. It was apparently common enough they needed a word for it. I'm sorry, but if you didn't want to know that you should have quit a paragraph back.

So, like I said, I used to write horror. After that incident, I packed up everything I had, which was not a lot, and hightailed it for the far side of the galaxy. The way I see it, it's only a matter of time until these fuckers get out, and I don't see any plan involving telling them we can measure up to their sheer vulgar insanity panning out. So I fled, and you should too.

Oh, and a last piece of advice. If anyone ever hands you a book called 'A Brief History of Earth', don't read it. You'll spend the rest of your life checking around every corner for Humans.

//Thanks so much to everyone for the positive feedback! I've been reading [r/HFY](#) for months, and am pleased beyond words that something I wrote was liked here. Thanks everyone!